

Department of Health

Preventing the Flu

Influenza (the flu) is usually spread through the air when a person who has the flu virus coughs, sneezes or speaks, and other people breathe in the virus. When these viruses enter the nose, throat, or lungs of a person, they begin to multiply, causing symptoms of the flu.

Whether or not you get a flu shot, there are a number of other things you can and should do to help prevent the spread of flu and other illnesses.

What you can do to keep from getting flu or spreading it to others:

- **Avoid close contact with people who are sick.**

When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.

If you're planning a visit, it's OK to ask first whether anyone in the household is sick.

If so, make plans to visit another time.

- **Stay home when you are sick.**

Stay home from work, school and public places when you are sick.

- **Cover your mouth and nose every time you cough or sneeze.**

It is best to use a tissue and then put used tissue into the trash.

- **Wash your hands often and well.**

Use soap and warm water and wash for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol hand sanitizer.

- **Keep your hands away from eyes, nose or mouth.**

Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

- **Clean surfaces you touch often.**

If someone in your household has symptoms of cold or flu, clean surfaces such as door knobs, water faucets, refrigerator handle, telephone, etc. often.

- **Don't share anything that goes into the mouth.**

This includes eating utensils, cups, straws, cigarettes, etc.

- **Keep healthy by getting plenty of rest, drinking plenty of liquids...**

getting regular exercise, and eating nutritious foods.

Check www.HealthyVermonters.info for the latest recommendations on preventing influenza.

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